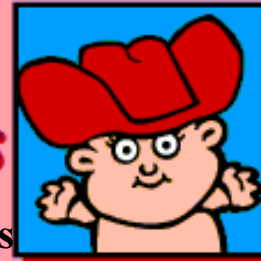




*** Tips For *** **Nursing Mothers**

Common Breastfeeding Myths



You hear a lot about breastfeeding these days. People tell you about the advantages and the basics of how to do it and about all the good things it's done for their children. But people also tend to pass on a lot of myths about breastfeeding. Of the many things you hear, what's the truth?

Does breastfeeding hurt?

If breastfeeding is hurting, it's a good idea to look for some help. Hurting is a sign that there may be a problem with the way you are holding your baby, or the way the baby is latched-on to the breast. Often, working with a nurse, lactation consultant or peer counselor can quickly fix whatever is not right and the hurting stops. Some women do feel a bit of discomfort in the early days when the baby first latches on, and they are getting used to nursing. But that feeling should not continue during the whole feeding and should not happen at all after the first week or two. If positioning and latch on are not the problems, hurting may be a sign of a yeast infection or skin irritation. A doctor or nurse can help with both of these problems.

Can a breastfeeding mom eat chocolate (or beans or jalapeños or garlic)?

Moms from all over the world eat lots of different foods and continue to breastfeed their babies. You should start out eating whatever foods you enjoy. Watch your baby. If you see signs of a reaction to certain foods, such as splotches on the skin, fussiness or diaper rash, then avoid that food for several days and check your baby's reaction. If you find that a certain food bothers your baby, wait a few weeks and try it again to see if

your baby's digestive system has matured and can now handle the food.

Does breastfeeding make your breasts get out of shape?

There is no research that shows breastfeeding changes the shape of your breasts. Once the initial fullness passes (usually in about 24 hours), the breasts soften and swelling goes down. However, pregnancy--and gravity--may cause some changes in the shape and size of the breasts.

Is it time to wean when a baby gets a tooth?

The best time to wean is when either the mom or the baby decide it's time. This time can vary a lot, and many women nurse babies with teeth. Sometimes babies with teeth can bite by mistake or in play. Often all you need to do is remind the baby to be gentle. If the baby continues to try to bite, you can tell him that you will have to stop nursing for a few minutes, but can nurse again when he isn't biting.

Moms can also watch their babies for clues that the baby might bite, such as a playful glint in the baby's eye. This advance warning is often all a mom needs to prevent a bite.

Do you have to drink milk to make milk?

The actual foods you drink and eat aren't what makes breastmilk--your body takes nutrients from any food you eat and puts it toward making breastmilk. A good rule to follow is to drink to avoid thirst and to eat when you are hungry.

Can being angry or anxious make your milk go bad?

Some people have heard this belief. Your feelings don't affect the taste of your milk. It is true that being anxious or nervous can make it harder to pump breastmilk. When pumping, try to relax and focus your thoughts on the baby. This can help the pumping to go better.

Do you have to have big breasts to breastfeed?

Women with all different sized breasts can make plenty of milk for their babies. The amount of milk a woman can make is related to the number of milk ducts in the breast, not the size of a breast. The size of the breast is related to the amount of fat in the breast. Most women have between 15 and 25 milk ducts in their breasts.

The truth about breastfeeding is that it is the normal, natural way to feed your baby. It provides excellent nutrition that has never been matched, is ready whenever the baby needs it, and costs nothing to produce. Children who are breastfed tend to have fewer problems with ear infections, respiratory diseases, stomach illness and allergies. Moms who breastfeed may lower their risk of certain types of cancer. Breastfeeding is something you need to learn, but there are many people in the community who are here to help you and your baby get off to a good start.

If you have questions about breastfeeding

contact your local:

WIC Breastfeeding Counselor:

La Leche League Leader:

Lactation Consultant:
